

REMARKS

Claims 31, 34 and 37 have been canceled. Thus, claims 13, 16-18, 20, 32, 35, 36 and 38-46 are pending. Independent claim 13 has been amended to include the limitations previously stated in claim 31. Claim 32 has been amended to depend from claim 13, and claims 38 and 40-44 have been amended to depend from claim 35. No new matter was added. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims of the present application are in condition for allowance.

The undersigned attorney wishes to express his appreciation to Examiner Levy for the courteous and constructive telephonic interview extended on December 14, 2004. At the interview, Applicants' attorney discussed the present invention and the differences between the present invention and the prior art previously cited by the Examiner.

Allowed Claims

In the Office Action, the Examiner states that "claims 35, 36 and 46 are allowed" and that claims 31 and 32 "would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims."

Independent claim 13 has been amended to include the limitations stated in dependent claim 31, which has been canceled. Thus, Applicant submits that claim 13, as amended, is in condition for allowance. Claims 16, 17, 18, 20 and 32 are directly or indirectly dependent from claim 13. Thus, claims 16, 17, 18, 20 and 32 are also submitted as being in condition for allowance.

Claims 38 and 40-44 have been amended to depend from independent claim 35. Thus, claims 35, 36 and 38-46 are submitted as being in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 13, 16-18, 20, 34 and 37-45 as being anticipated under 35 USC §102(b) by U.S. Patent No. 5,312,688 issued to Honguu et al., or in the alternative, as being obvious under 35 USC §103(a) in view of by U.S. Patent No. 5,312,688 issued to Honguu et al.

As stated above, independent claim 13 of the present application has been amended to include the limitations previously stated in dependent claim 31. For this reason, Applicant submits that claim 13 and dependent claims 16, 17, 18 and 20 are patentable over the Honguu patent.

Claims 34 and 37 have been canceled, and dependent claims 38-45, as amended, depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 35. For this reason, Applicant submits that claims 38-45 are patentable over the Honguu patent.


Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and removal of the §102(b)/§103(a) rejections of claims 13, 16-18, 20 and 38-45.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections have been overcome and that the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, a favorable action on the merits is therefore requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment for entering this Amendment to
our deposit account no. 08-3040.

Respectfully submitted,
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